



Connecticut Working Families Party
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Testimony IN FAVOR of HB 6901 AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR PARTY CANDIDATE CERTIFICATIONS.

Submitted by Lindsay Farrell, Connecticut Director

Representative Jutilla, Senator Cassano, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for hearing this bill today.

The Working Families Party is Connecticut's largest minor party. Our affiliated organizations represent over 110,000 working and retired men and women, we regularly garner tens of thousands of votes in statewide elections, and we have helped to elect cross-endorsed candidates, as well as our own for municipal and now legislative office. The WFP fights for an economy that is fair for everyone, one that provides opportunity for fair wages and benefits for all workers, education opportunities for any student, and a fair and open democracy for all people regardless of their wealth and access to power.

We want to thank the committee for raising HB 6901, and encourage it's passage. The bill simply does away with an administrative requirement that is both unnecessary and burdensome for minor parties. We support replacing the signature requirement with a notification requirement for the following reasons:

- Minor parties do not regularly nominate candidates who do not want our support, so the signature requirement is a solution to a problem that does not exist. In the case of the WFP, candidates who have already filled out questionnaires, met with us to interview for our support, and in many other ways indicated that they wish to appear on our ballot line need to be tracked down for a signature during busy campaign seasons. Both the candidate and the party would rather spend this time and energy on getting a message out to voters.
- Minor parties have many different requirements from the major parties – we have to meet petition requirements, Citizen Election Program thresholds, and other standards, no matter how many elections we are on the ballot for or how many candidates we support. This additional administrative requirement is just unnecessary and another hoop to jump through.
- The signature requirement has blocked the democratic process for other minor parties. In 2013, several minor party candidates were denied access to the ballot over this trivial paperwork issue. That's simply unfair. http://articles.courant.com/2013-10-09/news/hc-ed-minority-party-wins-ballot-access-20131009_1_minor-party-candidates-chatham-party-election-officials
- The solution proposed in the bill ensures that in the (extraordinarily unlikely) event that a candidate is unwillingly endorsed, that they will be informed and then be able to reject the nomination. Before the law was changed to require a signature in 2011, this almost never happened, but the language in this bill protects candidates in case it ever does again.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope the committee will pass HB 6901.